ADMISSION POLICY OF
OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL SCHOOL
2025/2026

Board of Management Review Dates:

05/11/2021- Ratified by Board of Management.

18/01/2021- Extension to expiry of Psychology Report from 2 to 3 years in Section 7.
(*The Board of Management agreed at a meeting held on 18/01/2022 to extend the expiry of Psychology Reports from 2 to 3 years, for applicants wishing to enrol for the school year 2022/2023. The Board appreciates the challenges of accessing medical assessments during the 2020 and 2021 Covid 19 Pandemic years, while recognising the import of relevant up to date cognitive assessments for enrolment*)

29/11/2022; Addition to section 1 further to Department of Education Circular 0075/2022. Ratified at Board of Management Meeting on 29/11/2022.

11/01/2023: Amendment to Section 6 (C) Oversubscription and to Admissions Notice.

10/02/2023 Further to review of existing applicants on the application list, as undertaken by the Principal after the 1st Feb 2023, the Board have agreed to remove the freeze on applications to OLGC School with immediate effect.
All applications for a place in OLGC School for the school year 2024/2025 must be made through the office using the Application Form found on www.olgcschool.ie Admission and Enrolment Policy, before the 31st October 2023.

30/09/2025- New Chairperson Billy Murphy appointed to the Board.
Board ratified amended policy in line with DES Circular 0039/2025.

- Note: Up-to-date Psychology reports of no later than **two years** after date of cognitive assessment can be accepted by the admissions committee**.**

08/06/2026- Amended by the Board: see section 7.

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School Address*: Our Lady of Good Counsel Special School, Innishmore, Ballincollig, Cork. P31FH22*

Phone number: *0214878370*

Roll number: *18208A*

School Patron: *The Bishop of Cork and Ross, Bishop Fintan Gavin*.

Principal: *Aisling Power*.

Deputy Principal: *Nollaig Moynihan.*

Chairperson: *Billy Murphy.*

1. Introduction

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Equal Status Act 2000. In drafting this policy, the board of management of the school has consulted with school staff, the school patron and with parents of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school Patron in May 2026. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for Our Lady of Good Counsel's admission process is set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned.

The application form for admission is published on the school's website and will be made available in hard copy on request to any person who requests it.

Our Lady of Good Counsel Special School will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council.

Our Lady of Good Counsel Special School will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b).

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2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Our Lady of Good Counsel School is a co-educational special school for children aged 4-18 years who have received a diagnosis of Moderate Intellectual Disability. The school is a Catholic school.

The school is governed by a Board of Management comprising a chairperson nominated by the Patron, the Bishop of Cork and Ross, Bishop Gavin, a patron's nominee, the principal, a teacher, two parents and two external members of the public. The final decisions with regard to the offering of places to pupils seeking enrolment subject to the conditions below rests with the Board. Every effort is made to provide parents with a speedy response to requests for enrolment; however, if delays are encountered, parents will be kept informed of the reason for the delay at the earliest possible opportunity.

Description of School;

Our Lady of Good Counsel School has the current capacity and resources for 68 pupils with a primary diagnosis of Moderate Intellectual Disability.

The school has both junior and senior cycles. In the senior school a number of specialist and vocational subjects are taught by part-time ETB teachers. Our website at www.olgcballincollig.ie provides additional information about the school.

In accordance with national legislation, pupils must have attained age 4 by September 1st of the initial school year and not exceed age 18 by Sept 1st of the final school year.

Our Lady of Good Counsel School aims;

- To help ensure that every pupil reaches his/her full potential academically, socially, creatively, emotionally, communicatively and linguistically.
- To promote tolerance and acceptance of others within their classroom and school community.
- To support positive behaviour and compliance with classroom and school rules through structured teaching, visual supports and positive behaviour support plans.
- To help the pupils develop a positive self-image and foster the incremental growth of their self-esteem as they progress through the school
- To help the pupils understand/ become aware of their environment and how they can influence it by making choices and communicating preferences in an appropriate manner.

3. Admission Statement

Our Lady of Good Counsel School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following grounds:

(a) the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,

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(b) the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,

(c) the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,

(d) the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,

(e) the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,

(f) the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,

(g) the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,

(h) the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or

As per section 61 (3) of the Education Act 1998, 'civil status ground', 'disability ground', 'discriminate', 'family status ground', 'gender ground', 'ground of race', 'religion ground', 'sexual orientation ground' and 'Traveller community ground' shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

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4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in Our Lady of Good Counsel School

Our Lady of good Counsel School provides an education exclusively for students with Moderate Intellectual Disability and may refuse admission to a student, where the student does not have professional clinical assessments of special educational needs provided for by this school. In line with best practice guidelines, the diagnosis of Moderate Intellectual Disability **must** be received following a Psychology Assessment by an Irish Registered Psychologist.

5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

a) the school is oversubscribed (please see section 6 below for further details)

b) a parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student

c) the applicant for admission does not have the specific category of special educational needs catered for by the school.

Our Lady of Good Counsel School, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for pupils aged 4-18 years with a diagnosis of Moderate Intellectual Disability.

6. Oversubscription

In the event that Our Lady of Good Counsel School is oversubscribed.;

By Section 60 of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2012 "oversubscribed", in relation to school, means-

(a) in respect of the intake group of the school, that the number of students seeking admission to the intake group is greater than the number of places being made available by the school in respect of the intake group concerned,
(b) in respect of a special class, that the number of students seeking admission to the special class is greater than the number of places being made available by the school in respect of the class concerned, or
(c) in respect of any other class or year that the number of students seeking admission to the class or year is greater than the number of places being made available by the school in respect of the class or year concerned.

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7. Eligibility Criteria requirements (Circular 39/2025)

Children and young people are eligible for enrolment in Our lady of Good Counsel Special School when the following is provided in support of such an application:

Professional report(s) outlining:

- The application must be supported by clinical evidence that the student has received a diagnosis of Moderate Intellectual Disability from a CORU registered Psychologist. Up-to-date Psychology reports of no later than two years after date of cognitive assessment can be accepted by the admissions committee**.**
- The completion of an application form and submission of requested up-to–date Psychology Assessment and Report does not confer an automatic right to a place in the school. Each application is subject to the Admissions Procedure set out in this policy.
- A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s evidenced in the professional reports
- Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs, along with the rationale for same
- A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a placement in a special school for pupils with moderate general disabilities.
- OLGC Special School serves **primary (junior) and secondary (senior) school-aged students** by offering a primary curriculum along with junior and senior cycle programmes. In the enrolment process, we will maintain **a balance between junior and senior school students to ensure suitable peer groups for both socialising and learning.**
- In the event there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above (the

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number of applicants exceeds the number of places) the following arrangements will apply;

Places will be offered to qualifying applicants (those who meet all the criteria in section 4 and 5) based on their age. In the Junior School (4 to 12 years), the youngest ranking applicants will be offered a place in each class where vacancies occur. In the Senior School (12 to 18 years) the youngest ranking applicants will be offered a place in each class where vacancies occur.

- Siblings of enrolled students diagnosed with moderate intellectual disability will be given priority to support family cohesion and the overall organisation in family logistics.

- Children of Staff diagnosed with moderate intellectual disability will be given priority to support family cohesion and the overall organisation in family logistics.

8. What will not be considered or taken into account for applications received after February 1st 2020 [the commencement of the Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018]

In accordance with section 62(7)(e) of the Education Act, the school will not consider or take into account any of the following in deciding on applications for admission or when placing a student on a waiting list for admission to the school:

(a) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;

(b) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;

(c) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;

(d) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school. This is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned.

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This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 1st January 2025 only).

9. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Our Lady of Good Counsel School will be based on the following:

- Our School's current Admission and Enrolment Policy.
- Our School's Annual Admissions Notice
- The clinical evidence that the student has received a diagnosis of Moderate Intellectual Disability from a CORU registered or Irish Registered Psychologist.
- Selection criteria that are not included in our school admission policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in our school.

10. Notifying applicants of decisions

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the annual admissions notice.

If a student is not offered a place in our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see section 19 below for further details).

11. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from Our Lady of Good Counsel School the applicant must indicate—

(1) whether the applicant has accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If the applicant has accepted such an offer, he/she must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and

(2) whether or not the applicant has applied for and awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or

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schools, and if so, he/she must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

12. Circumstances in which offers may not be made or may be withdrawn

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by Our Lady of Good Counsel School where—

(1) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
(2) an applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission on or before the date set out in the annual admission notice of the school.
(3) the parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student; or
(4) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in **section 11** above.

13. Sharing of Data with other schools

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 allows for the sharing of certain information between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students. Our Lady of Good Counsel School will be requesting information from a student's previous educational placement once the applicant has accepted an offer of a place to facilitate class placement based on information provided regarding current level of functioning, sensory needs, level of support required and any behavioural issues that might impact on class management.

14. Waiting list in the event of oversubscription

In the event of there being more applications for the school year concerned than places available, a waiting list of students whose

applications for admission to Our Lady of Good Counsel School were unsuccessful due to the school being oversubscribed will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list of Our Lady of Good Counsel School is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this Admission Policy.

Offers of any subsequent places that become available for and during the school year in relation to which admission is being sought will be made to those students on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the students have been placed on the list.

15. Late Applications

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the annual admission notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

16. Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows:

If a vacancy occurs due to a student leaving the school mid-year, the vacancy will be offered to the next candidate who has priority on the waiting list for entry to the school and who is of a similar age to the pupil leaving the school. This is to ensure balance of similar aged pupils within class groups.

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17. Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees

The Board of Our Lady of Good Counsel School or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

(a) an application for admission of a student to the school, or
(b) the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

18. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parent(s)/guardian(s) has/have requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students:

Catholic pupils are prepared for First Holy Communion and Confirmation and attend instruction for those sacraments. Pupils of other faiths or of non-faith remain in the classroom during this time on other activities under the supervision of staff.

19. Reviews/appeals

Right of Review

The parent of the student may request the board to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

The timeline within which such a review must be requested and the other requirements applicable to such reviews are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

The board will conduct such reviews in accordance with the requirements of the procedures determined under Section 29B and with section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

Note: Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of

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that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Right of appeal

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of the student may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission subject to paragraph 19 above.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(i) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due to the school being oversubscribed.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due a reason other than the school being oversubscribed.

Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills.

The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

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Development of Policy.

Meetings regarding the development of a new Admission Policy were held with the school staff on 26/04/2020 and with the parents of existing pupils on 28/04/2020.

The draft Admission Policy was circulated to Board members for consideration on 28/04/2020 and the draft Admission Policy was forwarded to the Patron on 30/04/2020

The Admission was formally ratified by a Board meeting on 24/082020.

This Admission Policy has been reviewed by the Principal and the Chairperson on 20/06/2021 in light of the changes to multi-disciplinary services to Our Lady of Good Counsel School and the dissolution of the Brothers of Charity Pre-Schools.

The delivery of clinical services to students of Our Lady of Good Counsel School is now being undertaken by Enable Ireland Children's Disability Network Team 12 West Central Cork.

The Admission Notice and Policy was reviewed and updated by the Board of Management at a meeting held on 02/11/2021

The Admission Notice and Policy was reviewed and updated and ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting held on 30/09/2025

Signed Chairperson: *Billy Murphy.*

Date: 30/09/2026

Date 08/06/2026.

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